

Sughrue

SUGHRIE MION ZINN MACPEAK & SEAS, PLLC

August 20, 2001

BOX PCT

Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231PCT/FR00/00354
-filed February 14, 2000

Re: Application of Jean-Louis PELLEGATTA
 DEVICE FOR CARRYING PREFORMS COMPRISING IMPROVED GRIPPING MEANS
 Assignee: SIDEL
 Our Ref: Q65499

Dear Sir:

The following documents and fees are submitted herewith in connection with the above application for the purpose of entering the National stage under 35 U.S.C. § 371 and in accordance with Chapter II of the Patent Cooperation Treaty:

an English translation of the International Application.
 three (3) sheets of drawings.

The Declaration and Power of Attorney, Assignment, will be submitted at a later date.

It is assumed that copies of the International Application, the International Search Report, the International Preliminary Examination Report, and any Articles 19 and 34 amendments as required by § 371(c) will be supplied directly by the International Bureau, but if further copies are needed, the undersigned can easily provide them upon request.

The Government filing fee is calculated as follows:

Total claims	12	-	20	=	x	\$18.00	=	\$00
Independent claims	1	-	3	=	x	\$80.00	=	\$00
Base Fee								\$860.00
Multiple Dependent Claim Fee								\$270.00

TOTAL FEE

\$1130.00

A check for the statutory filing fee of \$1130.00 is attached. You are also directed and authorized to charge or credit any difference or overpayment to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16, 1.17 and 1.492 which may be required during the entire pendency of the application to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. A duplicate copy of this transmittal letter is attached.

Priority is claimed from February 18, 1999 based on French Application No. 99/02586.

Since August 18, 2001 (30 months from the priority date) fell on a Saturday, the submission of these papers on Monday, August 20, 2001, is sufficient for National Stage Entry.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Boland
Registration No. 32,197

MXB/amt

DEVICE FOR CARRYING PREFORMS COMPRISING
IMPROVED GRIPPING MEANS

The present invention relates to the field of processes for manufacturing hollow
5 bodies of thermoplastic materials, in which a preform is first manufactured by injection before
obtaining the final container during a blow forming stage.

The preform obtained by injection generally presents a tubular cylindrical body that is
closed at one of its axial ends and which is extended at its other end by a neck, which is also
tubular. The neck is generally injected so that it already has its final form, while the body of
10 the preform is required to undergo a relatively significant deformation, in order to form the
final container following a blow forming operation.

In order to be able to proceed to this blow forming operation, the body of the preform
must be carried at a temperature that is higher than the vitreous transition temperature of the
material. To that end, the preform is temperature conditioned by circulating it inside an oven.
15 The oven has heating means formed from infrared lamps, for example, in front of which the
preform is moved by a carrying device.

However, when the preform is carried inside the oven, care must be taken that the
neck of the preform be heated as little as possible, to prevent it from becoming deformed,
because it is already in its final form. To do this, it is known that two protection ramps can be
20 arranged in the oven along the path of the preform, which protection ramps are placed on
either side of the preform, just at the level of the boundary between its neck and its body. In
this way, the ramps form a screen and the lamps can not emit rays directly toward the neck of
the preform.

However, because the rays emitted by the lamps are propagated in all directions,
25 some of the rays emitted by the lamp can reach the neck after penetrating to the interior of
the preform.

Indeed, the preforms are generally held on the carrying device by a gripping device
formed from a mandrel, which is engaged inside the neck of the preform, and which holds
said preform by tightening against the internal face of the neck. In this case, the tightened

mandrel prevents the rays that have penetrated into the interior of the preform from reaching the neck.

However, for certain applications it is advantageous not to hold the preforms by the internal face of the neck, for example in order to avoid any bacteriological contamination of that surface, if it is brought into contact with the product with which the container will be filled. This also makes it possible to eliminate any risk of scratching the internal face of the neck.

One solution to this problem consists in providing a gripping device for the bottle which cooperates with the external face of the neck of the preform. However, such an arrangement can result in the neck being heated by the rays that have penetrated into the interior of the preform, which should be avoided at any cost. This problem becomes particularly acute when the container being manufactured is a container having a neck with a large diameter, for example on the order of 80 millimeters. The cross section through which the rays pass to the interior of the preform is then particularly large.

A purpose of the invention is therefore to propose a new design of the gripping device for the preform that makes it possible to provide the best protection to the neck of the preform, particularly against excessive heating.

To that end, the invention proposes a device for carrying a preform in the temperature conditioned oven of a machine for blow forming containers of thermoplastic material, of the type in which the preform is obtained by injection molding and has, at one upper axial end of its body, a tubular neck that is directly injected to its final form, and of the type in which the preform is held on the carrying device by a gripping device, characterized in that the gripping device comprises gripping claws that enclose an outer surface of the neck to hold the preform, and it comprises an inner core that penetrates axially inside the neck such that it presents a lower transverse surface which, when the preform is in place on the gripping device, is substantially axially situated at the boundary between the neck and the body of the preform.

According to other characteristics of the invention:

– the lower transverse surface of the core forms a reflecting surface for the heating energy provided by the oven;

– the diameter of the core is substantially equal to but less than the inside diameter of the neck of the preform;

– the core is extended upward in the form of a radiator that allows the heat absorbed by the core to be dissipated;

5 – the gripping claws are made in the form of a bell open at the bottom, inside which the neck of the preform is axially engaged, the bell being provided with a series of radial slots that are angularly distributed so as to delimit, between two successive slots, one gripping claw that is elastically radially deformable;

10 – the bell is formed from a circular upper transverse plate from which a tubular skirt extends axially downward, the inside diameter of the skirt, at least for part of its length, being of smaller diameter than the outside diameter of the neck so that the claws engage on the neck by tightening it radially;

– the bell is made of plastic material;

– it has a circular spring that encircles the bell at the lower end of the claws to pull

15 them radially inward;

– the gripping device is rotatably mounted around its axis on the carrying device, which also carries the ejection means, making it possible to loosen the preform from the gripping device; the ejection means are arranged above the gripping device and have at least one finger that extends axially downward, and it is provided with means for the relative axial

20 displacement of the gripping device and ejection means in such a way that, during a relative ejection stroke, the ejection finger is placed against the preform, in order to move it axially downward with respect to the gripping device;

– the gripping device is mounted so as to be axially movable on the carrying device and the ejection means are attached axially but rotatably movable with respect to the carrying

25 device;

– during a relative ejection stroke, the ejection finger passes through an orifice in the upper plate of the gripping bell and is received in an aperture made in the periphery of the core.

The invention also concerns a temperature conditioning oven for a plastic container blow forming facility, characterized in that it has a carrying device incorporating any one of the preceding characteristics.

Other characteristics and advantages of the invention will appear through reading the

5 following detailed description, as well as in the drawings appended hereto, in which:

– Figure 1 is a diagrammatic view in perspective illustrating a gripping device and ejection means of a preform according to the methods of the invention;

– Figure 2 is an axial cross sectional view of a preform carrying device according to the invention; and

10 – Figure 3 is a view similar to that of Figure 2, in which the carrying device is illustrated after the ejection of the preform.

Represented in Figure 1 is a gripping device 10 for a preform 12. This device is intended to be carried by a carrying device 14 of the preform, one exemplary embodiment of which is illustrated in Figures 2 and 3.

15 The carrying device is intended to provide the circulation of the preform 12 inside a temperature conditioning oven, in order to enable the molding by drawing-blowing of the preform to obtain a container, for example a jar or bottle. In particular, the invention will find application at facilities for blow-molding containers of polyethylene terephthalate (PET), in which previously injection molded preforms are fed into a temperature condition oven, prior to 20 being transferred to the blow molding machine itself.

In such a facility, the oven is provided, for example, with a chain having a series of links that are articulated between each other and each of which is provided with means for carrying a preform. The chain turns around a closed circuit inside the oven and is provided, at the entrance of the oven, with means for loading the preform on a carrier link, and at the 25 outlet of the oven, means for unloading the preform.

The carrying device in the meaning of the invention can therefore take the form of a link in such a chain, but it can also be accomplished in any other known manner.

The carrying device 14 is therefore suited for circulating the preform 11 inside the oven according to a specific path, along which the preform moves in front of heating means, such as infrared lamps.

In order to ensure good homogeneity in heating the body of the preform, it is known that the preform is preferably rotated around its axis A1 all along its path in front of the heating means. To that end, the gripping device 10 of the preform 12 is carried by a shaft 16 with axis A1, which is mounted in rotation around axis A1, on a plate 18 of the carrying device 14. The shaft 16 also carries a toothed wheel 20 which can cooperate with a fixed rack (not represented) placed along the path of the preform 12 in the oven. Thus, when the plate 18 follows its path in the oven, the wheel 20 engages with the rack and causes the rotation of the shaft 16 and thus the rotation of the gripping device 10.

In the following description, it will be seen that the shaft 16 is also movable in transverse displacement along the axis A1 with respect to the plate 18.

For the sake of clarity in the following description, such ideas as high, low, upper, lower, etc., will be used in reference to the arrangement of the elements as represented in Figures 1 to 3. However, these ideas should not be interpreted as being limitations to the scope of the invention, especially as it is known that carrier chains which, after gripping the preform oriented with the neck up, allow the link to be turned over so that the preform circulates with the neck down in front of the heating means, before being turned over again for ejection.

Thus, the shaft 16 carries at its upper axial end the toothed wheel 20, at its lower end the gripping device 10, and it has a central section 22 which is guided by two bearings, lower 24 and upper 26, of the plate 18.

To control the axial movements of the shaft 16, a control ring 28 is provided, which is axially integral with the shaft 16, which is movably mounted on the shaft 16 in rotation around the axis A1. The ring 28 is mounted on the center section 22 of the shaft 16. It can therefore be moved axially, with the shaft 16, between the two bearings 24, 26, but it is immobilized in rotation around the axis A1 with respect to the plate 18. The ring 28 has a roller 30, which can cooperate with the fixed inclined ramps (not represented) of the oven, to cause the movement

of the shaft 16 between a low position, illustrated in Figure 2, and a high position, illustrated in Figure 3.

The preform 12 illustrated in Figures 2 and 3 has a conventional body 32. In the example, the body 32 is substantially tubular with axis A1 and is closed at its lower end by a substantially hemispherical bottom 34. The upper end of the preform 12 is composed of a tubular neck 36 with axis A1, which neck has on its outer surface means for the subsequent installation of a cap, these means in this instance being composed of screw threads 38. Beneath the screw threads 38, substantially at the boundary between the neck 36 and the body 32 of the preform 12, [is] a ring-shaped collar 40 that is radially in relief toward the outside. The lower surface 42 of this collar 40 is often used to carry the preform 12 or the final container. Indeed, the neck 36 is directly injection molded to its final form and is not transformed during the blowing operation. Thus the collar constitutes a reference surface that allows easy gripping.

According to a first aspect of the invention, the gripping device 10, carried by the shaft 16, is provided to grip and hold the preform by contact with the outer surface of the neck 36.

To that end, the gripping device 16 has a gripping bell 44, which has a circular upper plate 45 and a cylindrical skirt 46, which extends axially downward from the peripheral edge of the plate 45. The bell 44 therefore defines a cylindrical space open at the bottom, the lower edge of the skirt 46 being provided with an inner chamfer to facilitate the engagement of the neck of the preform in said space.

The bell 44 is radially slotted with six slots 50 distributed angularly around the axis A1. Of course, this number of slots is only given by way of example. Each slot 50 extends radially over about the outer third of the plate 45 and axially over the full height of the skirt 46. Thus, between two slots 50, an elastically deformable claw 52 is delimited, the free end of which, formed by the lower edge of the skirt 46, can be radially moved with respect to the axis A1.

Thus, the bell 44 is intended to be lowered axially, in order to enclose the neck 36 of the preform, the claws 52 elastically tightening on the outer surface of the neck. It can be

seen that the inner surface of the free end of the claws 52 is smooth, so that the preform 12 is gripped and held by simple radial tightening. In this instance, the claws 52 grip the preform by cooperating with the top of the thread 38.

The bell 44 is made, for example, of a polyacetal type plastic material. In this case, in order to reinforce the tightening force, a ring-shaped spring 54 can be provided, which fits tightly around the bell 44 at the lower edge of the skirt 46 to force the free end of the claws 52 radially inward. In the proposed example, the spring 54 is received in a circular groove made on the outer surface of the skirt 46, at its lower edge.

The gripping claws as just described represent only one preferred embodiment of the invention. Indeed, the means that make it possible to grip the preform by the outer surface of the neck could be accomplished differently. In particular, they could be made in the form of lifting tongs with articulated claws, or in the form of a mandrel with concentric jaws.

In the carrying device 14 that is illustrated, the "descending" movement of the shaft 16 and of the gripping device 10 is caused by a compression spring 56, which is placed around the shaft, pressing upward against the upper bearing 26 and downward against the control ring 28. The purpose of the roller 30 is essentially to ensure the "ascent" of the shaft 16 through the action of the spring 56. It can also be used to regulate the speed of the descending movement of the shaft 16 imposed by the shaft 16, for example by cooperating with a raised ramp.

When the preform 12 is loaded, it is taken beneath the carrying device 14, in which the gripping device 10 is in the upper position. The preform is then pressed down, for example, on guide rails by means of its collar 40. When the spring 56 pushes the shaft 16 downward, the bell 44 is engaged on the neck 36 of the preform, until an inner ring-shaped rim 58, formed on the inner surface of the skirt 46, presses against the upper edge 60 of the neck 36. Thus, when the preform 12 is gripped, its axial position is defined with precision.

According to a second aspect of the invention, the gripping device 14 has means for limiting the heating of the neck 36, these means being comprised of an internal core 62 which is integral with the bell 44, which core is arranged inside the space delimited by said bell, and which is designed to be received inside the neck 36 of the preform. According to the

invention, it has a transverse lower surface 64 that is perpendicular to the axis A1 and which is placed, when the preform is in place on the gripping device, substantially at the boundary between the neck 36 and the body of the preform. In this instance, the lower surface 64 is arranged at the same level as the lower edge of the skirt 46 of the bell 44 and as the collar 40 of the preform 12.

In the proposed example, the core 62 has a shape such that it matches as closely as possible the inner surface of the neck 36, without, however, coming into contact therewith. However, it will be understood that the first essential function of the core is to form an obstacle to the rays. It can thus be comprised of a simple axial rod having a transverse plate 10 at its lower end.

The lower transverse surface of the core 62 is preferably suitable for reflecting the incident rays. However, in some applications it could be arranged for the core to absorb these rays, at least partially, and means could be provided to evacuate the energy thus stored.

In the proposed example, the lower transverse surface 64 is made in the form of an 15 attached reflector, the bottom face of which is polished to increase its reflective power. However, the inner surface could also be an integral part of the body of the core. By way of example, the reflector and the body of the core are both made of aluminum in order to limit the weight.

According to another aspect of the invention, the body of the core 62 is furnished with 20 fins 66 to facilitate the dissipation of the heat that is absorbed by the lower face 64, despite its reflective nature. According to the proposed example, these fins 66 extend in planes perpendicular to the axis A1, and are axially separated from each other by annular grooves 68 with axis A1 which extend radially toward the interior over more than half the radius of the core 68, from the outer periphery thereof.

25 In order to evacuate the heat from the fins 66, the claws 52 are furnished with openings 70 that are cut in the tubular skirt 46, and which make it possible to ensure circulation of air between the fins.

Appropriately, an air circulation device will be used for this that is generally provided in an oven of this type to ensure the cooling of the infrared lamps. Part of the air flow from the

oven's ventilation system is then channeled to provide for the cooling of the core of each of the carrying devices.

One example of such a ventilation system is described in the document FR-A-2.561.986. In such a system, a negative pressure is created in the oven so that fresh air

5 enters the oven through the opening delimited by the protection ramps that prevent the rays from reaching the outer surface of the neck. Also, in this system, the fresh air drawn toward the oven tends to circulate around the neck of the preforms and can therefore, thanks to the device according to the invention, participate in the cooling of the core 62.

However, fresh air nozzles can also be provided along the path followed by the
10 preforms in the oven, which nozzles are directed specifically toward the gripping device 10 of each of the carrier links.

The core 62 therefore makes it possible to prevent the rays that penetrate into the preform from being able to strike the neck. On the contrary, the lower surface 64 tends to reflect them. Moreover, by ensuring the cooling of the core, its temperature is prevented from

15 rising to the point where it could possibly heat the neck. This risk becomes greater as the diameter of the neck increases, even though it should be noted that the core, not being in contact with the preform, can only heat the neck by convection or by radiation, but not by conduction.

Moreover, the preform carrying device 14, according to the invention, has means that
20 allow a preform held by the gripping device, upon exiting from the oven, to be ejected.

To that end, it is provided with an ejection device that comprises a collar 72 that is fitted with three cylindrical fingers 78, distributed at 120° around a circle with a diameter that is substantially identical, but slightly less, than the diameter of the neck of the preform. The fingers 78 extend axially downward and thus pass through orifices 80 made in the upper plate 25 45 of the bell 44 and are partially received in the apertures 82 formed in the peripheral surface of the core. The collar 72 that has the fingers 78 is mounted in rotation around the axis A1, owing to a ball bearing 74, on a support 76, which itself is attached to the lower bearing 24 of the plate 18. The ejection device is therefore axially attached with respect to the plate 18.

DRAFT

When the shaft 16 and the gripping device 10 are in the lowered position as illustrated in Figure 2, the lower end of the fingers 78 is located above the level of the rim 58 of the skirt 46, which forms a stop for the neck 36 of the preform. Also, the fingers 78 do not then interfere with the preform.

5 On the contrary, when the roller 30 causes the gripper device and thus the preform to rise, the upper edge 60 of the neck of the preform comes into contact with the fingers 78, which are axially fixed. In that way, the gripper device continues to rise, but not the preform, until the neck 36 escapes the claws 52, the preform then being freed as can be seen in Figure 3.

10 It will be noticed that the fingers 78 remain continually engaged inside the orifices 80 of the bell 44 and the apertures 82 of the core 62. Also, it is important that the collar 72 that carries them be rotatably movable so that they do not resist the rotation of the gripper device.

15 Appropriately, the gripper device is mounted on the shaft 16 by a known bayonet device. The gripper device thus comprises a bore 84, an upper part of which forms a bayonet cap intended to be received in a corresponding bushing formed at the lower end of the shaft 16, and a lower part of which bore, provided with a shoulder 86, allows assembly by the axial stacking of a support cone 88, the bell 44 and the core 62. A screw 90 with axis A1, the head of which supports the lower face of the bore 84, is screwed up into the lower part of the bore 84.

20 The axial stacking is such that the core 62 supports the upper plate 45 of the bell 44, which in turn is supported, by means of the cone 88, by the shoulder 86.

25 However, the core 62 is centered according to the axis A1 directly over the lower part of the bore 84 and the bell 44 is centered over the core. Moreover, the bell 44 and the core 62 are angularly indexed with respect to each other by a slug 92, which makes it possible to ensure that the orifices 80 of the bell 44 are aligned with the apertures 82 of the core 62.

It will be noted that the bayonet mounting of the gripper device 10 allows very quick assembly and dismantling. This makes it possible to change the type of preforms processed in the oven, particularly when the same oven is to be used to process preforms having different neck diameters. At present, during such a change, all of the gripping devices of the

carrier chain must be changed, which can represent more than two hundred units. It is therefore easy to understand the value of the possibility of quick assembly/dismantling of the gripping device. To the same end, Figures 2 and 3 show that the ejection device has a support 76 that is attached to the plate 18 by simple elastic fitting.

CLAIMS

1. Device for carrying a preform in the temperature condition oven of a facility for blow forming containers made of thermoplastic material, of the type in which the preform (12) is obtained by injection molding and comprises, at an axial upper end of its body (32), a tubular neck (36), which is directly injected to its final form, and of the type in which the preform (12) is held on the carrying device (14) by a gripping device (10) having gripping claws (52) that enclose an outer surface of the neck (36) to hold the preform (12),

characterized in that the gripping device (10) comprises an inner core (62) that penetrates axially inside the neck (36), such that it presents a lower transverse surface (64) which, when the preform (12) is in place on the gripping device (10), is substantially axially situated at the boundary between the neck (36) and the body (32) of the preform (12), and in that the lower transverse surface (64) of the core (62) forms a reflecting surface for the heating energy provided by the oven.

15 2. Carrying device according to claim 1, characterized in that the diameter of the core (62) is substantially equal to, but less than, the inside diameter of the neck (36) of the preform (12).

20 3. Carrying device according to either of the preceding claims, characterized in that the core (62) is extended upward in the form of a radiator (66, 68) that allows the heat absorbed by the core (62) to be dissipated.

25 4. Carrying device according to any of the preceding claims, characterized in that the gripping claws (52) are made in the form of a bell (44) open at the bottom, inside which the neck (36) of the preform (12) is axially engaged, the bell (44) being provided with a series of radial slots (50) that are angularly distributed so as to delimit, between two successive slots, one gripping claw (52) that is elastically radially deformable.

5. Carrying device according to claim 4, characterized in that the bell (44) is formed from a circular upper transverse plate (45), from which a tubular skirt (46) extends axially downward, the inside diameter of the skirt (46), at least for part of its length, being of smaller

diameter than the outside diameter of the neck (36), so that the claws (52) engage on the neck (36) by tightening it radially.

6. Carrying device according to claims 4 or 5, characterized in that the bell (44) is made of plastic.

7. Carrying device according to any one of claims 4 to 6, characterized in that it has a circular spring (54) that encircles the bell (44) at the lower end of the claws (52) to pull them radially inward.

8. Carrying device according to any of the preceding claims, characterized in that the gripping device (10) is rotatably mounted around its axis (A1) on the carrying device (14, 18).

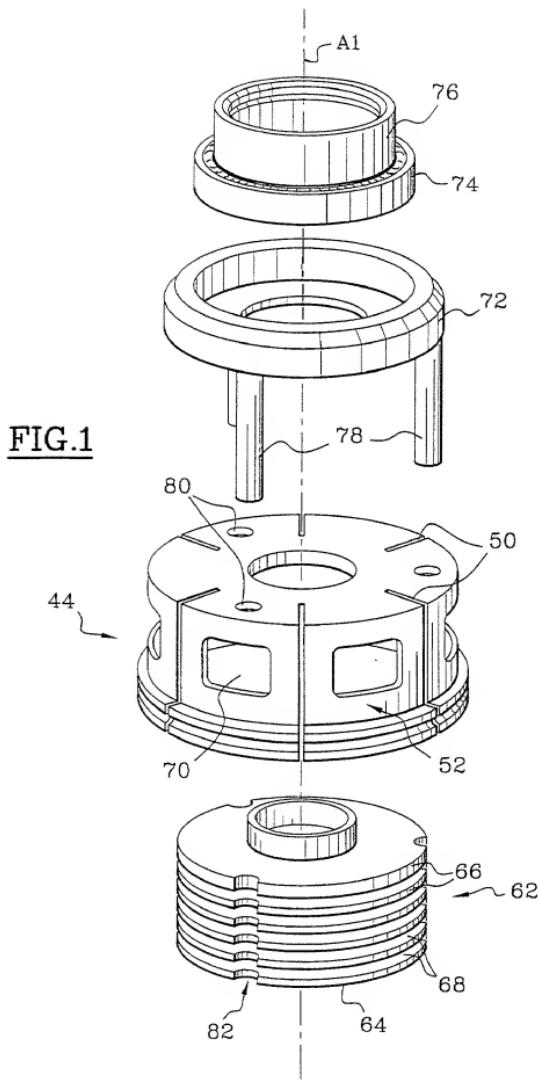
10 which also carries the ejection means, making it possible to loosen the preform (12) from the gripping device (10); the ejection means are arranged above the gripping device (10) and have at least one finger (78) that extends axially downward, and it is provided with means (16, 28, 30) for the relative axial displacement of the gripping device (10) and ejection means (78) in such a way that, during a relative ejection stroke, the ejection finger (78) is placed against

15 the preform (12) in order to move it axially downward with respect to the gripping device (10).

9. Carrying device according to claim 8, characterized in that the gripping device (10) is mounted so as to be axially movable on the carrying device (14, 18), and the ejection means (78) are attached axially, but rotatably movable with respect to the carrying device (14, 18).

20 10. Carrying device according to either one of claims 8 or 9, characterized in that
taken in combination with claim 5, during a relative ejection stroke, the ejection finger (78)
passes through an orifice (80) in the upper plate (45) of the gripping bell (44) and is received
in an aperture (82) made in the periphery of the core (62).

11. Temperature conditioned oven for a plastic container blow forming facility,
25 characterized in that it has a carrying device incorporating any one of the preceding
characteristics.



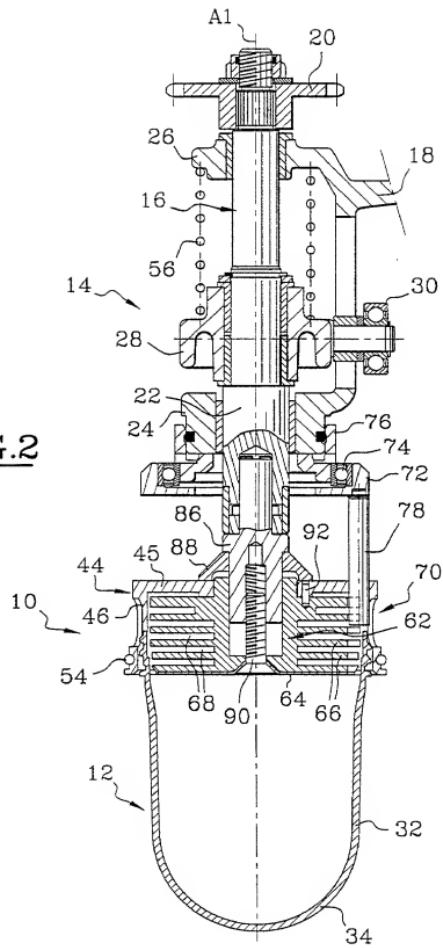
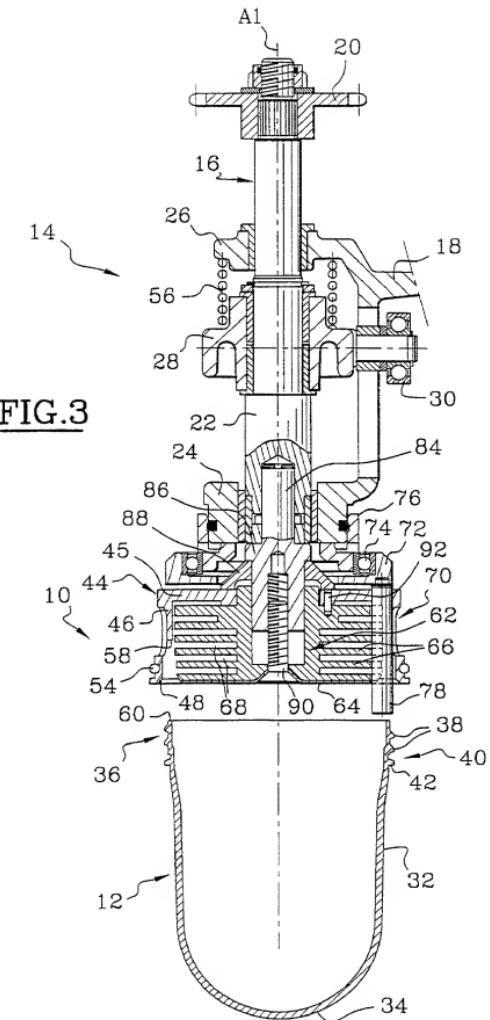


FIG.2



Declaration and Power of Attorney for Patent Application

Déclaration et Pouvoirs pour Demande de Brevet

French Language Declaration

En tant que l'inventeur nommé ci-après, je déclare par le présent acte que:

Mon domicile, mon adresse postale et ma nationalité sont ceux figurant ci-dessous à côté de mon nom.

Je crois être le premier inventeur original et unique (si un seul nom est mentionné ci-dessous), ou l'un des premiers co-inventeurs originaux (si plusieurs noms sont mentionnés ci-dessous) de l'objet revendiqué, pour lequel une demande de brevet a été déposée concernant l'invention intitulée

et dont la description est fournie ci-joint à moins que la case suivante n'ait été cochée:

a été déposée le _____
sous le numéro de demande des Etats-Unis ou le numéro de demande international PCT _____
et modifiée le _____ (le cas échéant).

Je déclare par le présent acte avoir passé en revue et compris le contenu de la description ci-dessus, revendications comprises, telles que modifiées par toute modification dont il aura été fait référence ci-dessus.

Je reconnais devoir divulguer toute information pertinente à la brevetabilité, comme défini dans le Titre 37, § 1.56 du Code fédéral des réglementations.

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated next to my name.

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled

DEVICE FOR CARRYING PREFORMS COMPRISING
IMPROVED GRIPPING MEANS

the specification of which is attached hereto unless the following box is checked:

U.S. Serial No. 09/913,823 filed August 20, 2001,
which is the U.S. National Stage Application of PCT/FR00/00354,
filed February 14, 2000.

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, § 1.56.

French Language Declaration

Je revendique par le présent acte avoir la priorité étrangère, en vertu du Titre 35, § 119(a)-(d) ou § 365(b) du Code des États-Unis, sur toute demande étrangère de brevet ou certificat d'inventeur ou, en vertu du Titre 35, § 365(a) du même Code, sur toute demande internationale PCT désignant au moins un pays autre que les États-Unis et figurant ci-dessous et, en cochant la case, j'ai aussi indiqué ci-dessous toute demande étrangère de brevet, tout certificat d'inventeur ou toute demande internationale PCT ayant une date de dépôt précédant celle de la demande à propos de laquelle une priorité est revendiquée.

Prior foreign application(s)

Demande(s) de brevet antérieure(s)

99/0286	French
(Number) (Numéro)	(Country) (Pays)
(Number) (Numéro)	(Country) (Pays)

Je revendique par le présent acte tout bénéfice, en vertu du Titre 35, § 119(e) du Code des États-Unis, de toute demande de brevet provisoire effectuée aux États-Unis et figurant ci-dessous.

(Application No.) (N° de demande)	(Filing Date) (Date de dépôt)

Je revendique par le présent acte tout bénéfice, en vertu du Titre 35, § 120 du Code des États-Unis, de toute demande de brevet effectuée aux États-Unis, ou en vertu du Titre 35, § 365(c) du même Code, de toute demande internationale PCT désignant les États-Unis et figurant ci-dessous et, dans la mesure où l'objet de chacune des revendications de cette demande de brevet n'est pas divulgué dans la demande antérieure américaine ou internationale PCT, en vertu des dispositions du premier paragraphe du Titre 35, § 112 du Code des États-Unis, je reconnais, devoir divulguer toute information pertinente à la brevetabilité, comme définie dans le Titre 37, § 1.56 du Code fédéral des règlementations, dont j'ai pu disposer entre la date de dépôt de la demande antérieure et la date de dépôt de la demande nationale ou internationale PCT de la présente demande:

(Application No.) (N° de demande)	(Filing Date) (Date de dépôt)

Je déclare par le présent acte que toute déclaration ci-incluse est, à ma connaissance, vérifique et que toute déclaration formulée à partir de renseignements ou de suppositions est tenue pour vérifiable; et de plus, que toutes ces déclarations ont été formulées en sachant que toute fausse déclaration volontaire ou son équivalent est passible d'une amende ou d'une incarcération, ou des deux, en vertu de la Section 1001 du Titre 18 du Code des États-Unis, et que de telles déclarations volontairement fausses risquent de compromettre la validité de la demande de brevet ou du brevet délivré à partir de celle-ci.

I hereby claim foreign priority under Title 35, United States Code, § 119(a)-(d) or § 365(b) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate, or § 365(a) of any PCT International application which designated at least one country other than the United States, listed below, and have also identified below, by checking the box, any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate, or PCT International application having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed.

Priority Not Claimed
Droit de priorité non revendiqué

February 18, 1999
(Day/Month/Year Filed)
(Jour/Mois/Année de dépôt)

(Day/Month/Year Filed)
(Jour/Mois/Année de dépôt)

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, § 119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below.

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, § 120 of any United States application(s), or § 365(c) of any PCT International application designating the United States, listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States or PCT International application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code, § 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, § 1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT International filing date of this application.

(Status)(patented, pending, abandoned)
(Statut)(breveté, en cours d'examen, abandonné)

(Status)(patented, pending, abandoned)
(Statut)(breveté, en cours d'examen, abandonné)

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

French Language Declaration

POUVOIRS: En tant que l'inventeur cité, je désigne par la présente l'(les) avocat(s) et/ou agent(s) suivant(s) pour qu'ils poursuive(nt) la procédure de cette demande de brevet et traite(nt) toute affaire s'y rapportant avec l'Office des brevets et des marques: (mentionner le nom et le numéro d'enregistrement).

John H. Mion, Reg. No. 18,879; Robert J. Seas, Jr., Reg. No. 21,092; Darryl Mexic, Reg. No. 23,063; Robert V. Sloan, Reg. No. 22,775; Peter D. Olexy, Reg. No. 24,513; J. Frank Osha, Reg. No. 24,625; Louis Gubinsky, Reg. No. 24,835; Neil B. Siegel, Reg. No. 25,200; David J. Cushing, Reg. No. 28,703; John R. Inge, Reg. No. 26,916; Joseph J. Ruch, Jr., Reg. No. 26,577; Sheldon I. Landsman, Reg. No. 25,430; Richard C. Turner, Reg. No. 29,710; Howard L. Bernstein, Reg. No. 25,665; Alan J. Kasper, Reg. No. 25,426; Kenneth J. Burchfiel, Reg. No. 31,323; Gordon Kit, Reg. No. 30,764; Susan J. Mack, Reg. No. 30,951; Frank L. Bernstein, Reg. No. 31,484; Mark Boland, Reg. No. 32,192; William H. Mandir, Reg. No. 32,156; Brian W. Hamon, Reg. No. 32,728; Abraham J. Rosner, Reg. No. 33,276; Bruce E. Kramer, Reg. No. 33,725; Paul F. Neils, Reg. No. 33,102; and Brett S. Sylvester, Reg. No. 32,765; Robert M. Masters, Reg. No. 35,603; George F. Lehning, Reg. No. 36,359; John T. Callahan, Reg. No. 32,602; Steven M. Gruskin, Reg. No. 36,818; Peter A. McKenna, Reg. No. 38,551 and Edward F. Kenehan, Reg. No. 28,962

POWER OF ATTORNEY: As a named inventor, I hereby appoint the following attorney(s) and/or agent(s) to prosecute this application and transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith: (list name and registration number)

Adresser toute correspondance à:

Send Correspondence to:
SUCHRUE MION, PLLC
2100 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Suite 800
Washington, D.C. 20037-3213

Adresser tout appel téléphonique à:
(nom et numéro de téléphone)

Direct Telephone Calls to: 202-293-7060
(name and telephone number)

Nom complet de l'unique ou premier inventeur		Full name of sole or first inventor <u>Jean-Louis PELLAGATTA</u>	
Signature de l'inventeur		Inventor's signature <u>D. Pella</u> <u>06 December 2001</u> Date	
Domicile		Residence <u>c/o Sidel, Avenue de la Patrouille de France, 76930 Octeville-sur-Mer, France</u> <u>Fpx</u>	
Nationalité		Citizenship <u>French</u>	
Adresse postale		Post Office Address <u>Same as residence</u>	
Nom complet du second co-inventeur, le cas échéant		Full name of second joint inventor, if any	
Signature du second inventeur		Second inventor's signature	
Domicile		Residence	
Nationalité		Citizenship	
Adresse postale		Post Office Address	